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S. 4633

To require a strategy for the deployment, employment, integration, exportability, and scaling of unmanned and autonomous systems in the Indo-Pacific region and the Western Hemisphere, to strengthen homeland defense, to support counter-narcotics and counter-trafficking operations, and to increase ally and partner burden sharing, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 21, 2026

Mr. McCORMICK (for himself and Mr. FETTERMAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To require a strategy for the deployment, employment, integration, exportability, and scaling of unmanned and autonomous systems in the Indo-Pacific region and the Western Hemisphere, to strengthen homeland defense, to support counter-narcotics and counter-trafficking operations, and to increase ally and partner burden sharing, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Unmanned and Auton-
5 omous Systems Strategy Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. STRATEGY FOR DEPLOYMENT OF UNMANNED AND**
2 **AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS IN INDO-PACIFIC RE-**
3 **GION AND WESTERN HEMISPHERE.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense, in co-
5 ordination with the officials specified in subsection (b),
6 shall develop a strategy for the deployment, employment,
7 integration, sustainment, exportability, and scaling of un-
8 manned and autonomous systems in the Indo-Pacific re-
9 gion and the Western Hemisphere.

10 (b) SPECIFIED OFFICIALS.—The officials specified in
11 this subsection are the following:

12 (1) The Commander of the United States Indo-
13 Pacific Command.

14 (2) The Commander of the United States
15 Southern Command.

16 (3) The Commander of the United States
17 Northern Command.

18 (4) The Commandant of the Coast Guard.

19 (5) The head of the Defense Autonomous War-
20 fare Group.

21 (6) The Secretary of State.

22 (7) The Secretary of Homeland Security.

23 (8) The Secretaries of the military departments.

24 (9) Any other United States Government offi-
25 cial the Secretary of Defense considers appropriate.

1 (c) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required by subsection
2 (a) shall include the following:

3 (1) An assessment of current capability gaps
4 and operational requirements with respect to the de-
5 ployment of unmanned and autonomous systems
6 within the areas of responsibility of the United
7 States Indo-Pacific Command, the United States
8 Southern Command, and the United States North-
9 ern Command, including with respect to—

10 (A) persistent maritime, air, littoral, and
11 undersea domain awareness;

12 (B) undersea surveillance and anti-sub-
13 marine warfare;

14 (C) long-range strike and attritable sys-
15 tems;

16 (D) integration of artificial intelligence and
17 decoy operations;

18 (E) counter-unmanned systems operations;

19 (F) logistics and communications relay;

20 (G) electronic warfare and signals intel-
21 ligence collection;

22 (H) mine detect and defeat; and

23 (I) United States homeland security mis-
24 sions to counter narcotics, trafficking, and
25 transnational criminal organizations in the

1 Western Hemisphere, including such missions
2 in support of maritime interdiction and detec-
3 tion-and-monitoring operations.

4 (2) An assessment of the scope of unmanned
5 and autonomous systems that may be deployed
6 across, air, surface, and subsurface domains in the
7 Indo-Pacific region and the Western Hemisphere, in-
8 cluding—

9 (A) an identification of—

10 (i) unmanned aircraft systems;

11 (ii) small, medium, large, and extra-
12 large unmanned surface vessels;

13 (iii) undersea vehicles, including re-
14 motely operated and autonomous such ve-
15 hicles; and

16 (iv) unmanned and autonomous sys-
17 tems platform attributes;

18 (B) the numbers of unmanned and autono-
19 mous systems, unmanned undersea vehicles
20 available for such deployment, including re-
21 motely operated and autonomous vehicles; and

22 (C) for each system identified under sub-
23 paragraph (A)—

1 (i) an evaluation of capability for arti-
2 ficial intelligence integration and auton-
3 omy-enabled software;

4 (ii) operational range, time-on-station,
5 payload capacity, autonomy levels, and sur-
6 vivability; and

7 (iii) associated launch and recovery
8 systems, control stations, communications
9 links, sensors, payloads, and modular mis-
10 sion packages, and other operationally rel-
11 evant performance parameters.

12 (3) An identification of prospective basing,
13 staging, and forward deployment locations for UAS
14 and UUV systems within the areas of responsibility
15 of the United States Indo-Pacific Command, the
16 United States Southern Command, and the United
17 States Northern Command, including an assessment
18 of—

19 (A) existing United States military instal-
20 lations and their capacity to support unmanned
21 systems operations and long-term storage of
22 such systems;

23 (B) partner country facilities and agree-
24 ments necessary to enable forward deployment;
25 and

1 (C) at-sea and submarine-launched deploy-
2 ment concepts.

3 (4) An evaluation of the maturity and dem-
4 onstrated operational suitability of endurance-ena-
5 bling propulsion technologies, including hybrid-elec-
6 tric propulsion, with attention to efficiency, reli-
7 ability, acoustic performance, and sustainment con-
8 siderations.

9 (5) A plan for cross-domain integration of UAS
10 and UUV systems into the broader joint force, in-
11 cluding enhancement of conventional weapon sys-
12 tems, manned platforms, artificial intelligence sys-
13 tems, and command-and-control networks.

14 (6) A summary of ongoing experimentation,
15 prototyping, and operational demonstrations, includ-
16 ing lessons learned from use by the United States
17 Indo-Pacific Command and the United States Spe-
18 cial Operations Command.

19 (7) A plan for co-design, co-development, co-
20 production, and interoperability of unmanned sys-
21 tems with allies and partners, with particular em-
22 phasis on—

23 (A) Australia, Israel, Japan, the Republic
24 of Korea, Taiwan, and Ukraine; and

1 (B) partners under the Advanced Capabili-
2 ties pillar of the AUKUS partnership.

3 (8) An assessment of adversary unmanned sys-
4 tems capabilities and counter-unmanned systems
5 threats, and recommendations for measures to en-
6 sure survivability and mission effectiveness of United
7 States and allied unmanned systems.

8 (9) A resource and procurement plan identi-
9 fying near-term, mid-term, and long-term invest-
10 ments in UAS and UUV programs required to exe-
11 cute such strategy, including an identification of
12 programs of record, rapid acquisition pathways,
13 scalability and manufacturability, supply chain
14 vulnerabilities, and commercial off-the-shelf options.

15 (10) A plan for addressing supply chain de-
16 pendencies and vulnerabilities for UAS and UUV
17 systems, consistent with the requirements of the
18 American Security Drone Act of 2023 (Public Law
19 118–31; 137 Stat. 691; 41 U.S.C. note prec. 3901),
20 as applicable, to ensure that United States military
21 unmanned systems are not dependent on compo-
22 nents manufactured by entities subject to the influ-
23 ence or control of a covered foreign entity.

24 (11) Metrics and milestones for measuring the
25 implementation and effectiveness of the strategy.

1 (d) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 180
 2 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
 3 retary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense
 4 committees (as defined in section 101 of title 10, United
 5 States Code) the strategy developed under subsection (a).

6 (e) BRIEFING.—Not later than 1 year after the date
 7 on which the strategy required by subsection (a) is sub-
 8 mitted, and annually thereafter through 2030, the Sec-
 9 retary of Defense shall provide the congressional defense
 10 committees with a briefing on—

11 (1) the status of implementation of the strat-
 12 egy;

13 (2) any changes in adversary unmanned sys-
 14 tems capabilities or operational behavior that affect
 15 the strategy;

16 (3) progress on allied and partner co-develop-
 17 ment and interoperability initiatives;

18 (4) procurements, deployments, and exercises
 19 conducted in furtherance of the strategy; and

20 (5) any recommended updates or modifications
 21 to the strategy.

22 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

23 (1) COVERED FOREIGN ENTITY.—The term
 24 “covered foreign entity” has the meaning given that
 25 term in section 1822 of the National Defense Au-

1 thorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 (Public Law
2 118–31; 10 U.S.C. 4661 note).

3 (2) UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM; UAS.—The
4 terms “unmanned aircraft system” and “UAS”
5 mean an unmanned aircraft and associated ele-
6 ments, including communication links and the com-
7 ponents that control the unmanned aircraft, in ac-
8 cordance with section 44801 of title 49, United
9 States Code.

10 (3) UNMANNED UNDERSEA VEHICLE; UUV.—
11 The terms “unmanned undersea vehicle” and
12 “UUV” mean an unmanned, self-propelled vehicle
13 that operates below the surface of the water, includ-
14 ing remotely operated vehicles and autonomous un-
15 dersea vehicles.

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